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DIRECTORATE OF
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: To further his presidential candidacy, Premier Ky may be striking a political bargain with the major faction in the Constituent Assembly.

On 3 April, leaders of the Democratic Alliance Bloc discussed with Ky their plans to expand the bloc's influence in the assembly and subsequently to make it the nucleus of a progovernment political party supporting Ky, [REDACTED] Ky reportedly approved, and implied that he would assist cooperative assemblymen during their campaigns for election to the lower house of the legislature this fall.

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There have been numerous past indications of cooperation between this group and Premier Ky. The degree to which cooperation develops in the future, however, will probably depend upon the ability of the bloc to influence the assembly's action during the coming months.

US Embassy officials continue to believe that Premier Ky's prospects for becoming the military's presidential nominee are slightly better than those of Chief of State Thieu. Although [REDACTED] military members of the Directorate and other key generals may meet today to choose between Ky or Thieu, embassy officials still believe that competition for the presidential nomination will most likely be resolved by the two men through a private arrangement made during the next few weeks.

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Elections for village councils proceeded smoothly yesterday for the second successive Sunday with the percentage of eligible voters participating slightly exceeding that on 2 April. Viet Cong interference was



minimal. Even local elections near Quang Tri city, the scene of widespread Viet Cong military action last week, were conducted without notable harassment.

Military Developments in South Vietnam: No major ground actions were reported in South Vietnam this weekend.

Communist forces, however, carried out a partially successful mortar attack on the base camp of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division in the central highlands early on 9 April. The mortar barrage was aimed at the division airfield near An Khe, where more than 400 helicopters and observation aircraft are stationed. Prompt suppressive fire by ground artillery and armed helicopters silenced the enemy mortar units within eight minutes and limited the damage to 12 aircraft. Nine US soldiers were killed and 15 wounded during the encounter.

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NOTES

Bulgaria - East Germany: A Bulgarian diplomat has indicated that negotiations have been completed on a new treaty of friendship and mutual assistance with East Germany. The treaty will be another in the series fostered by East Germany and Poland in their effort to forestall West Germany's campaign to normalize relations with the East Europeans. While the Czechs are also joining in the new arrangements, the Hungarians are resisting, as are the more independent Rumanians, who established relations with West Germany in February. 

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Syria-Israel: The Israeli-Syrian border remains quiet in the wake of Friday's major clash, although both sides remain on alert. Israel appears satisfied for the present that the destruction of six of Syria's 26 MIG-21s has demonstrated its military superiority. The Syrians have threatened retaliation, but probably will rest for the time being on their unsupported claim to have downed five Israeli Mirages. Thus far the Syrians have received no tangible support from their Egyptian allies. 

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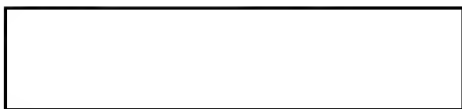
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